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SALESBRIGHT™

SELLING SMART: WHAT WE DO MATTERS



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annoy (uh-'noi) verb: to disturb or irritate especially by repeated acts

The last thing we want to do is annoy them.

It's never our intent. But our intent doesn't matter.

What we do, matters.

The sales facts...

They don't like it when we're pushy.

They don't like it when we call too much.

They don't like it when we're "just checking in."

They don't like it when we're unprepared.

They don't like it when we're disrespectful of their time (page 3).

They don't like it when we keep calling if they say they're not interested (page 4)

They don't like it when we don't respond fast enough.

They don't like it when we appear not to understand them,
their industry, their situations, and their challenges.

They don't like it when we don't work in their interest.

They don't like it when we don't listen (page 5).

They don't like it when we don't know about our own products/ services (page 6).

They don't like it when we're rude, arrogant, or inattentive (page 7).

They don't like it when we're vague or unclear (page 8).

They don't like it when they're made to feel like they're interrupting us.

They don't like it when we seem like we're "just trying to sell them something" (page 9).

And, they can't stand it when we won't take no for an answer.

What do they like?

A return on their investment (page 10)... to get more, to save more, to look good, to feel good, to be loved.

That's it.

Anything else and we're wasting their time. And ours.

Don't be sales dumb.

Be sales bright.

Go deeper with the following pages.

management check: how do you and your team avoid being annoying?

Here's one idea...

one way to avoid annoying

First, consider your current sales process (see below) – from contact through closure. Include, also, what happens when you follow up with customers in your service efforts.

Write down the known “annoyers” that occur at each stage – things you’ve been told by prospects and customers directly and things you’ve been told by them through their actions (e.g., not responding to your repeated calls).

Now, the difficult part... brainstorm replacement activities that’ll be considered by your prospects and customers to be helpful rather than annoying.

Choose what you feel are the best ideas, try them, evaluate results and adapt accordingly.

And, remember, with time comes change (technology, environments, competitive situations, etc.). The things you do today may not be acceptable in the future... just as the things you did in the past may now be unacceptable.

the fun of a formal sales process

You can easily be good. It requires only a small amount of effort beyond the norm.

To be one of the greats, to go to the next level requires the consistent ability to follow through and finish – another small difference but one with the potential for tremendous results.

The best way to be sure you and your team are following through and finishing every sales opportunity is to have a deliberate and formal process to which you hold yourself and/or your team accountable – a fairly obvious improvement strategy that’s so often set aside with the belief that it’s intuitive and doesn’t need to be documented.

It does.

Sales is not a game. Nothing about it should be left to chance. An effective process that ensures progress toward the goal of bringing in new customers and retaining current customers is what you and your team should strive for. Your process should be methodical, predictable, and hold you and/or your team accountable.

Fun is closing more business. Fun is exceeding expectations.

Be sure your initial sales process efforts are not wasted by a lack of follow-through. Invest the time outside the money hours to create the deliberate and predictable process that will help you and your team stay on track in every sales opportunity (see page 11 for a sample formal sales process).

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help manage their time

Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.

Antoine de Saint Exupery (1900-1944)
French aviator and writer, wrote The Little Prince

Consider for a moment, the time management efforts of your prospects & customers. Generally speaking, most people have a tremendous number of activities on their plates each day. As a result, they (like you) have their own time management challenges each week.

Those business professionals who deliver the most value to the prospect and customer in a clear and concise way with each contact will be those professionals who have their calls returned, meetings taken and emails replied to (ever avoid responding, engaging with or asking a question of someone who's known to be a "talker"?).

Over the next two weeks, evaluate your regular communications with prospects and customers (by phone, email, voice mail, in person, etc.). Check yourself for unneeded verbiage, vague communication and cluttered presentation. Make it easy for your prospects and customers to...

- understand what's in it for them
- how they can sell the purchase within their department or home, and
- how they can get started or take delivery

The clock is ticking with every contact. Create a feeling – a trademark – of efficiency, value and respect with your prospects and customers.

Help them manage their time more effectively and rise above the noise.

5 quick and actionable ideas

Some quick and actionable ideas to start branding you and your team with a trademark of efficiency, value and respect with your prospects and customers...

- script all common verbal and email communications (those that you do every sales day and in every sales process)
- lead your written and verbal communications with the information that you believe the contact will value most; conclude with the lesser important support information or consider eliminating it until it's requested
- repeat your phone number on voice mail messages twice at the conclusion of your message; slow it down the second time
- bullet and/ or separate the very necessary facts of your written communications (email, letter, fax)
- anticipate your prospects' and customers' needs for additional information and deliver it (verbally or written) before it's requested; use it as a concrete reason to contact or visit rather than "just checking in"

continual qualifying

With such a limited number of true selling hours each day, your and your team's time should be invested with people who should, can and most likely will buy your offering. A moment with anyone else (when you're aware of it) is a time management tragedy (for justsell's time management guide, visit www.justsell.com/time).

Continually qualifying your sales opportunities is the best way to make sure you're investing your sales time wisely.

Here's how...

1. Create a list of your formal qualification points.
2. Assume nothing throughout the entire sales process.
3. Continually ask qualifying questions.
4. Be prepared to end a sales process if it no longer looks like a good investment of time.
5. Always close a discussion confirming next action steps (further qualifying your prospect's/ customer's commitment to the effort).

confirming action steps (keeping the process moving)

As you work through your sales days this month and quarter, remember that all sales calls and meetings (in person or on the phone) should conclude with concrete action steps for all individuals involved (even if the next step is to do nothing). And, for those action steps to be concrete for everyone, they must be...

1. well-defined at the end of the discussion and
2. agreed to by everyone

Benefits? Wheel spinning is minimized, everyone's time is used more effectively on both sides (page 3) of the table, more people will love you, they'll ask you to run for president, it'll be yours if you want it, and...

You'll become a salesperson among business people -- the noblest of pursuits.

Make it concrete.

Always ask yourself "What's the next step?"... and know the answer.

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(see the appendix for a postable reminder)

QUESTIONS, LISTENING

the best questions, the best listening

We work with those we trust to solve our problems.

It's this simple.

Your promise to deliver a result (to get more, to save more, to look good, to feel good, to eliminate pain, or to be loved) is only purchased when your prospects and customers trust you to deliver. For current customers, developing and confirming a level of trust can be established partially through history – how your solution to their need has performed before. But with those who don't have a relationship with you, trust is developed as you show an interest in their situations and needs.

The fundamental beginning to developing trust...

1. asking pertinent questions
2. listening with complete attention

After making contact and getting your prospects' initial attention, it's time to give your attention to them.

Quick sales audit...

How do you and your team rate on asking questions and listening to responses?

Other than making contact with people, nothing will serve your and your team's efforts to establish trust and increase sales better than becoming experts in asking the right questions and following up with true listening. This is what engages people. This is how you learn more about them and their situation. This is how you establish trust and credibility.

This is how you sell.

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(start by reviewing and practicing the 30 open-ended questions list in the appendix)

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know your stuff: pk/ ik development

Your prospects & customers depend on you to be an expert on your product.

While a relentless focus on talking with prospects and customers at every possible moment of the sales day precedes all else in importance, you and your team must know your business.

Product and industry knowledge on their own will never close a sale, but used and presented well, they will certainly enhance your perceived value to your prospects and customers.

Are you and your team regularly improving your knowledge on the details of what it is you sell and what it is your competitors sell? (hint: a company-wide quarterly meeting doesn't make experts)

Putting together a formal PK/ IK* development plan (on your own or with your team) is well worth your time (outside the money hours, of course). It doesn't have to be complex. It need only be a commitment to the effort and then implemented.

It's your sales world. Choose to know your business.

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*PK/ IK – product knowledge/ industry knowledge



**GET THE LEAD.
CLOSE THE DEAL.**

Offering insight and intelligence on over 21 million companies and 28 million executives, worldwide, Hoover's provides you the competitive edge you need to:

- ▶ Go beyond names and numbers to find, target and qualify leads
- ▶ Develop new sales opportunities with existing clients
- ▶ Track and anticipate industry trends

For the most comprehensive, up-to-date information available on the companies, industries, and the people who lead them, you won't find a better resource than Hoover's.

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A D&B COMPANY

With over 28 Million contacts, the only real question is where to start.

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everyone's the ceo

Everyone's the CEO and everyone's the decision maker.

The person who just called you. The person you're about to call. The person who just walked in. The person who just left.

Everyone.

Lock it down. Make it your mindset for every contact (this month and every month for the rest of your sales years). No exceptions.

You and your team are the face of the products or services your company provides. Treating everyone with whom you make contact as though they're the CEO (regardless of their true role) can have only a positive effect on establishing rapport and building relationships. Additionally, it's this approach that will help you and your team minimize your chances of making a costly assumption at some point in the future. Almost everyone who's been selling for more than a year can tell you their story of assumption they wish they didn't have.

Remember this for every inbound call... for every outbound call... for every tradeshow floor.

Every single contact... Everyone's the CEO.

(see the appendix for a postable reminder that everyone's the ceo)

STRENGTHENING TRUST

strengthening trust: the gray and omissions check

When you and your team are working with your prospects and customers (which should be about 85% of your time), remember that gray areas of communication can present serious challenges to the mutual trust level of your long-term relationships. Work to eliminate any omissions in your communication and be sure that all possible gray areas of understanding are minimized.

When you have a moment, invest some time (outside the money hours, as always) in a “gray and omissions check” of your standard sales statements, presentations and other regular sales communications.

Think long-term as you develop your customer relationships and you’ll always be one of the best in the business... long term.

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beyond the “hit & run” sale

Consider for a moment how your prospects & customers would describe your and your team's contact efforts with them.

Would they say you're transactional or relationship oriented?

A common sales acronym is ABC (Always Be Closing). A simple message. A very true message.

The challenge is to implement it without your prospect or customer feeling like you're "always trying to sell them something" with every contact. If this grows to be the perception, your access becomes limited and returned calls and emails become fewer.

This is not where you want to be.

This is a transactional relationship. It makes it extremely difficult to identify new or approaching needs. It's easily penetrated by competitors. And for those who sell to businesses, when the decision maker changes you'll be one of the last to know.

Over the next two weeks, invest some time outside the money hours* to evaluate how you and your team currently provide value beyond the transaction and create three new ways you can improve (or start) the effort to become more relationship oriented.

Remember, you should never be too busy to further develop your business relationship with qualified prospects & customers. These are your most important people.

* money hours: the hours in a sales day where one can talk with prospects and/ or customers... the most valuable hours of the day (see the appendix for a postable reminder)

relational vs. transactional

How would your prospects & customers describe your and your team's contact efforts with them? Would they feel your interests were their interests? Would you be considered "the resource" for your industry, product or service line? Would they feel like you're genuinely trying to save them money or time (or make them money, help them to look good or to feel good)?

Some ideas to get started on being more relationship oriented in your sales efforts...

- if you sell to businesses, make executive level to executive level contact between your organization and those to whom you sell (demonstrating a commitment to your business relationship at a higher level)
- provide industry information that helps address your clients' and prospects' needs (do it once a month or quarter regardless of a sales effort)
- establish mutual long-term goals with your primary contacts and work continually to help them achieve their goals where your industry expertise is a fit
- orchestrate efforts internally among various departments at your company to help each serve your prospects and new customers better – anticipate needs
- conduct educational seminars

return on investment

Your prospects' and customers' first concern when evaluating your product or service is the return or value they receive on their investment – their investment of time and money. This evaluation occurs at every stage of the sales process – not simply during the final stages. And remember, even the evaluation time of your product or service is part of the investment equation – especially for larger complex sales.

Over the next few weeks, evaluate each step of your typical sales process (approach to presentation, close to follow-up) and how you are communicating a positive return on investment for your prospects in terms of their time and money... and adjust accordingly.

Remember, it's all about them.

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(see the appendix for a postable reminder that it's all about them and the roi)

(for justsell's return on investment tool, visit www.justsell.com/roi)



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SAMPLE SALES PROCESS

sales process checkpoints (a sample)

1. identify, approach & engage the prospect

- initial approach call
- initial approach email (immediately following call)
- initial follow-up call (two days later if no contact made)
- initial follow-up email (immediately following call)
- secondary follow-up call (two days later if no contact made)
- third follow-up call (three days later if no contact made)
- third follow-up email (immediately following call)

2. learn about the prospect

- discover primary, secondary and hidden needs/ objectives
- identify decision makers
- identify timelines for possible purchase/ implementation
- identify budget
- gauge buying urgency

3. analyze needs

- evaluate & qualify opportunity
- create options/ solutions

4. present solutions to needs

- propose/ discuss options/ solutions
- gauge buying urgency and qualify

5. negotiate

- address value issues
- create buying urgency
- find win/ win

6. close

- agree to purchase
- confirm timeline to implementation/ delivery/ payment

7. service & follow-up

- hand off to account management team

SALESREMINDERS, GUIDES, & QUOTES

Perfection is achieved
not when there is nothing
more to add, but when
there is nothing
left to take away.

Antoine de Saint Exupery

(1900 - 1944)

French aviator and writer,
wrote *The Little Prince*



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MONEY HOURS

THE HOURS IN A SALES DAY WHEN ONE CAN
TALK WITH PROSPECTS AND/ OR CUSTOMERS...
THE MOST VALUABLE HOURS OF THE DAY



qualifying quick guide

creating formal qualification points

To create a list of your formal qualification points, take an objective look back at those deals you've won over the last year/ month/ week and find the common threads that brought these customers into your business. Consider such points as...

- o Do those who buy from us have a stated date or timeline for implementation when the sales process begins?
- o Do our prospects/ customers usually have a specific budget allocated for purchasing our product/ service?
- o What's the typical title or area of responsibility of those who buy from us?
- o Do most people who buy from us purchase something from someone else that's similar to our product/ service?
- o Is our firm usually the first company the prospect approaches for a product/ service like ours, or the last?
- o Are most people who buy from us first-time buyers of our product/ service?
- o Do most people who buy from us buy something else first?

Then look for the common threads among the deals you lost. When these points come up in the future, you'll know it's likely better to allocate your sales time elsewhere.

qualifying questions

Powerful questions to help you continually qualify your prospects...

What do you see as the next action steps?
What is your timeline for implementing/ purchasing this type of service/ product?
What other data points should we know before moving forward?
What budget has been established for this?
What are your thoughts?

Who else is involved in this decision?
What could make this no longer a priority?
What's changed since we last talked?
What concerns do you have?

sample exit statements

How to most appropriately exit a sales situation that's no longer worth your time...

"At the moment, I'm not sure we can provide enough value to you, but I'd like to keep in touch should things change. May I keep in touch periodically?"

"That sounds like an exciting project. We may be a little early in our discussions given all of your priorities. May I give you a call in two months?"

"Wow, you really have your hands full at the moment. Perhaps we should talk again in a few months and let you focus on these other priorities. May I subscribe you to our company newsletter?"

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the open-ended questions

information gathering...

What prompted you/ your company to look into this?
What are your expectations/ requirements for this product/ service?
What process did you go through to determine your needs?
How do you see this happening?
What is it that you'd like to see accomplished?
With whom have you had success in the past?
With whom have you had difficulties in the past?

Can you help me understand that a little better?
What does that mean?
How does that process work now?
What challenges does that process create?
What challenges has that created in the past?
What are the best things about that process?
What other items should we discuss?

qualifying...

What do you see as the next action steps?
What is your timeline for implementing/ purchasing this type of service/ product?
What other data points should we know before moving forward?
What budget has been established for this?
What are your thoughts?
Who else is involved in this decision?
What could make this no longer a priority?
What's changed since we last talked?
What concerns do you have?

rapport, trust & credibility...

How did you get involved in... ?
What kind of challenges are you facing?
What's the most important priority to you with this?
Why?
What other issues are important to you?
What would you like to see improved?
How do you measure that?



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what's the
next step?



everyone's the **CEO**



IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM



TO GET MORE
TO SAVE MORE
TO LOOK GOOD
TO FEEL GOOD
TO BE LOVED

ROI



about the authors

sam parker

Sam is a cofounder of justsell.com (MaxPitch Media, Inc.). Before starting justsell.com, Sam sold in several different industries – financial services, pharmaceuticals, joint replacements, office products and software. Today, one of his primary purposes in life is to serve the subscribers of justsell.com and its sponsoring partners.

He's also the author of [212° the extra degree™](#), blogs at www.justparker.com, speaks to groups occasionally, has a degree in marketing from James Madison University (1987), loves advertising and sells daily. He frequently thanks Jim for being the master of business administration so he doesn't have to be.

jim gould

Jim is also a cofounder of MaxPitch Media and a business geek. He loves all aspects of being in and running a business. In college, he was even in a business fraternity, and currently, he may be the only founder of an Internet company who still wears white, starched shirts most of the time.

Before justsell.com, he was in sales and management for an international finance company and in 1997, caught the web bug with an Internet banking company (before web banking actually used the Internet).

Jim guest lectures to university classes on sales, entrepreneurship, and online marketing. He graduated from James Madison University in 1988, with degrees in finance and international business, and George Mason University in 1997, with a master in business administration. He secretly wishes Sam would have become a master in business administration as well.

about justsell.com

justsell.com is a free resource for sales executives, managers and professionals. Its newsletters and site provide professional development tips and ideas as well as business leads and information... pure salesLove™.

It currently has more than 150,000 people subscribing to its email newsletters (as of April 2007) and enjoys serving more than 200,000 visitors of its site each month.

Those who'll find the most value from justsell.com are...

- sales executives, managers and professionals
- marketing professionals
- business owners and entrepreneurs
- people new to sales management or to the sales profession
- people considering a career change to sales

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